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FM AMEMBASSY SUVA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1555  
INFO RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 2397  
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 0080  
RUEHPB/AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY 1818  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY MAJURO 0873  
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RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0538  
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SENSITIVE

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SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR MCGANN MEETING WITH FIJI FM KUBUABOLA

1) (SBU) On November 25, FM Kubuabola requested an urgent meeting at MFA. Kubuabola was under instructions from strongman Bainimarama to meet with resident UN Security Council Permanent Ambassadors (U.S. France and China) and UK High Commissioner to discuss Fiji's reclama to UN U/SYG Lynn Pascoe's decision to deny Col. Driti's appointment as the next commander of Fiji's UNAMI contingent. Kubuabola asked permission for RFMF Chief of Staff Col. Aziz to travel to New York for a meeting with Fiji's Permrep and Pascoe to challenge allegations regarding Driti's human rights abuses or other illegal activities related to the 2006 coup. Aziz did not have any role in the government overthrow and his rank would not otherwise prohibit travel to the U.S. Aziz will submit his visa application on/about November 27.

2) (SBU) I told Kubuabola that the U.S. under its UN charter responsibilities would not deny a visa for Aziz noting that we regularly issued visas to Fijian officials, including RFMF, for meetings at UN Headquarters. However, I emphasized that visa issuance should not be seen as an endorsement of Driti and made clear it was Fiji that had to disprove the allegations. Moreover, it did not matter whether he personally committed an offense or commanded others to do so. Kubuabola seemed unaware that Driti previously had been turned down for Iraq duty in 2008.

3) (SBU) Turning to other areas, Kubuabola said the Public emergency Regulations (PER) would be lifted by the end of December but asked that the U.S. not make any public statements until the Fiji government announcement. I agreed. Regarding a related issue, I also pointed out that holding a national dialogue on Fiji's political future limited to individuals and banning the SDL and other political parties would not be well received by the U.S. nor would it constitute a democratic practice. Kubuabola acknowledged this announcement was Bainimarama's doing but hinted that his proclamation might not stand.

4) (SBU) Kubuabola also revealed that NZ FM McCully planned to travel to Fiji in early January. Kubuabola said he reached out to AUS FM Smith through Acting HC Sarah Robertson. Smith apparently agreed in principle to a meeting but promised to get back to Kubuabola on the possibility of a January trilateral meeting. Kubuabola is working hard at being a friendly interlocutor but regularly gets undercut by the regime's actions.